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FRENCH FIGURE SCULPTURE ON SOME EARLY SPANISH CHURCHES

I

THE question of French sources for Spanish architecture and carving in the Middle Ages is not only hotly disputed, it is too often unfairly begged. If Spanish savants at times imply that the Peninsula received no influx of ideas after the Byzantine, yet on the other hand French scholars coolly write down, without a note of warning, such unwarrantable assertions as that Petrus Petri, the architect of Toledo cathedral, was a Frenchman. In dealing with half a dozen early churches in which (I think) the forms, or the iconography, or the arrangement of the figure-sculpture about the portals show that French workmen were there, I have tried to formulate a canon of judgment, somewhat as follows:

1. If the forms are those of French schools—the school of Toulouse, or the school of Chartres, or the school of Vézelay—we may justly infer a French master.

2. If a town lies on the pilgrim's direct road from France into Galicia, we may admit a legitimate presumption of French influence.

3. If, having found along with examples of case 1, other French traits, we then find these traits elsewhere (*e.g.* the Signs of the Zodiac and Labors of the Months, the Last Judgement in the tympanum, or consecutive histories from saintly legend in the archivolt), we may take them to establish a presumption of French influence themselves.

The half-dozen churches lie nearly all along the Way of S. James. Not being in cathedral towns for the most part, they have little history recorded. What they have deals with the gifts of Spanish kings to Knights of the Temple or of S. John, as at Sangüesa and Puente la Reina, or with the building of the Way, as at Estella, or with the repeopling from Burgundy, as at

Avila. The evidence must be sought, not in the archives, but in the stones. Yet during the whole period of church-building, travellers were crowding along the Way: the professional pilgrim, the man who went for a vow, and the workman on the tramp with his sack of tools over his shoulder. There must have been among these many stone-cutters and architects, for theirs is a wandering craft.

We know from one notebook that has survived, how a mediaeval architect saw the world. Villard de Honnecourt sketched in the thirteenth century precisely as George Street sketched in

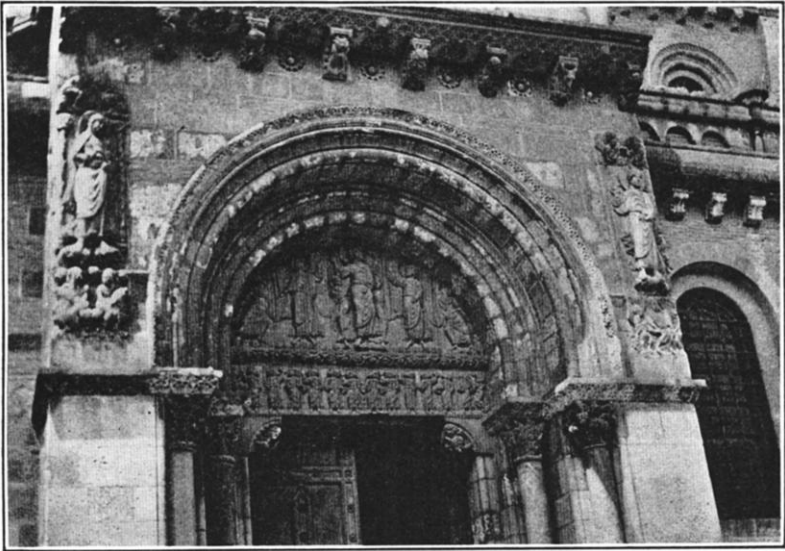


FIGURE 1.—TOULOUSE; S. SERNIN; PORTAL OF TRANSEPT

the nineteenth. He went as far as Hungary, and perhaps his friend Peter of Corbie went as far as Toledo. Wherever he went, the notebook was in his wallet or in his hand; he put down what he saw, what he thought; whenever a discussion was on, the notebook was out.

"Vesci une glize d'esquarie (he writes) ki fu esgardée a faire en l'ordene de Cistiaus. Vesci l'esligement del chavec me Dame Sainte Marie de Canbrai, ensi com il ist de tierre. Avant en cest livre en trouverés les montées dedens et dehors, et tolé le maniere des capeles et des plains pans autresi, et li maniere des

ars boterès. Istud bresbiterium invenerunt Ulardus de Huncort et Petrus de Corbeia, inter se disputando. Istud est presbiterium Sancti Pharaonis in Miaus. Vesci l'csligement de le glize de Miax de Saint Estienne. [These at the bottom of the page of drawings.] Deseure est une glize a double charole ki Uilars de Huncort trova et Pierres de Corbie. J'estoie une fois en Hongrie la u je mès maint jor; la vi jo le pavement d'une glize de sifaite maniere. Chi prennés matere d'on piler metre a droites loisons. [It is at Rheims.] Ista est fenestra in templo Sancte Marie Carnoti." [N. D. de Chartres.]¹ The next drawing is the



FIGURE 2.—LEON; S. ISIDRO; PORTAL OF SOUTH TRANSEPT

rose of Lausanne. Such notebooks would come into play when men met, "*inter se disputando*," along the Way of S. James.

¹ "This is a square headed church that was planned for the order of Cîteaux. This is the plan of the chevet of Our Lady S. Mary of Cambrai, as it is rising from the ground. Earlier in this book you will find the interior and exterior elevations of it and all the construction of the chapels and walls as well, and the construction of the flying buttresses. This sanctuary Villard of Honnecourt and Peter of Corbie worked out in discussion. This is the sanctuary of S. Faro in Meaux. This is the plan of S. Stephen's church at Meaux. Above is a church with double ambulatory that Villard of Honnecourt and Peter of Corbie found out. I was once in Hungary and stayed there a good while. I saw the pavement of a church after this fashion. This shows how to set up a pillar with attached shafts (?). This is a window in the church of S. Mary of Chartres."

That way came in from France by four roads, which joined at Puente la Reina in Navarre. The first ran by S. Gilles, Montpellier, Toulouse, and the Port of Aspe. The second came down from Le Puy, by Conques and Moissac; the third from Vézelay, by S. Léonard (near Limoges) and Périgeux; the fourth by Tours, Poitiers, S. Jean d'Angély, Saintes and Bordeaux. The last two crossed the Pyrenees by the Port de Cize, and through the valley of Roncevaux, and came to Pampe-luna, due north twenty miles from the bridge that the Queen built, "and one way thence forward goeth on to S. James." The ways are long: at present I have to do mainly with one, and to begin with the pilgrims only at Toulouse.

If the church of S. Sernin was begun in 1080 and consecrated in 1094, the south transept portal should be dated 1090 or thereabouts. Figure 1 shows the lintel and tympanum of the door, with flanking figures of angels on the upper face of the portal, and Figure 2 the south transept portal of S. Isidro at Leon. The relation between them is plain. At S. Sernin the finished style of the transept has its earlier stage in the reliefs built up in the walls of the ambulatory—Christ¹ amid the tetramorph, two angels, and two apostles—which we are compelled to throw back into the third quarter of the eleventh century in order that the

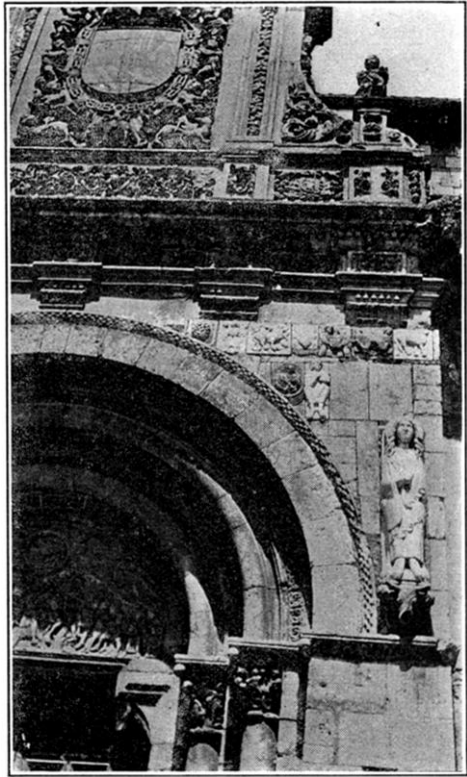


FIGURE 3.—LEON; S. ISIDRO; PORTAL IN SOUTH SIDE; SPANDREL

¹ Figured in Michel, *Histoire de l'Art*, I, p. 614.

place for which they were made should be destroyed and the figures, remaining on hand, should be used again in later building.

S. Isidro at Leon is a church with a well attested history. It was dedicated in 1063 by Ferdinand I. It was enlarged from 1101 to 1149 by Alfonso VII, and then reconsecrated. Señor Lampérez would give the apses and transepts, including this *Puerta del Perdon*, to the time of Ferdinand I and his daughter,

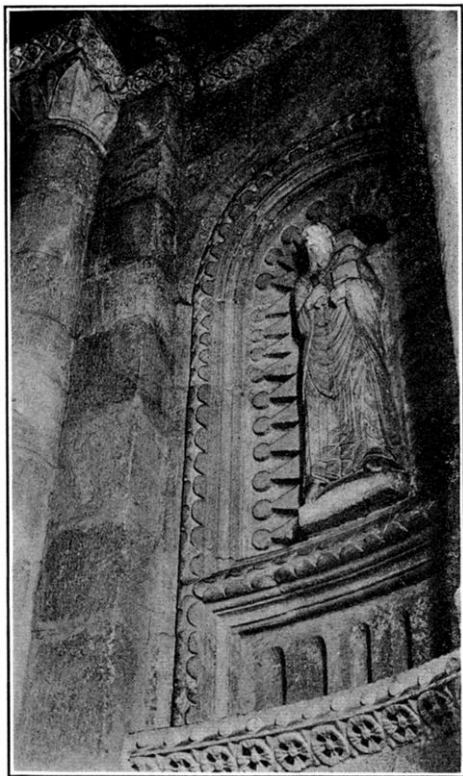


FIGURE 4.—SORIA; S. JUAN DE RABANEYRA;
APOSTLE

and the nave with a larger south doorway to Alfonso VII. There is, however, evidence on the spot for some rebuilding not recorded. Inside, the windows of the first bay are crossed by vaulting shafts;¹ outside, on the face of the south portal, are built into the wall signs of the Zodiac and other figures from an earlier door in the same position (Fig. 3). The two saints in the spandrels here are less archaic than those on the transept face, but the confused compositions that fill the tympana are much alike and much like those of the *Puerta de las Platerias*² at Santiago of Compostela.

The south portal of Santiago is dated by an inscription 1078, which probably means that the church was begun in that year.³ This, as well as the north portal and a third at the

¹ Cf. Street, *Gothic Architecture in Spain*, I, p. 158 (new edition).

² Figured in Michel, *op. cit.* II, p. 251.

³ Cf. the date on the transept of Val-de-Dios in Asturias, 1218, the year in which Master Galtiero began the church on May 18. See Street, *op. cit.* I, p. 224.

west, destroyed to make way for Master Matthew's Gloria of 1183, is described in a manuscript of *ca.* 1140, which constitutes the fourth book of the Codex Compostellana, called "of Pope Calixtus," revised and annotated by Aymery Picaud, a French pilgrim.¹ The remains of the north door were in their turn removed when Ventura Rodriguez rebuilt that in the eighteenth century, and inserted in and about the south door, wherever there was room.

A great *chantier* was building Santiago for at least a hundred and thirty years. Bernard, *Magister Mirabilis*, was at the head of it in 1071. Matthew (who had built the Puerta Cesuri in 1161) was at the head of it in 1168 and was succeeded at the end of that century by his son. It was alive and organic; successive generations of stone-cutters there practised their trade, reinforced by newcomers, criticised and instructed by arriving pilgrims.

The figures of the south porch take one back to Moissac and Toulouse, not only now to S. Sernin but to the figures in the Museum. These, that once stood about the chapter-house of the cathedral of S. Etienne² and the cloister of La Daurade, show, themselves, signs of an art in bright ascend-

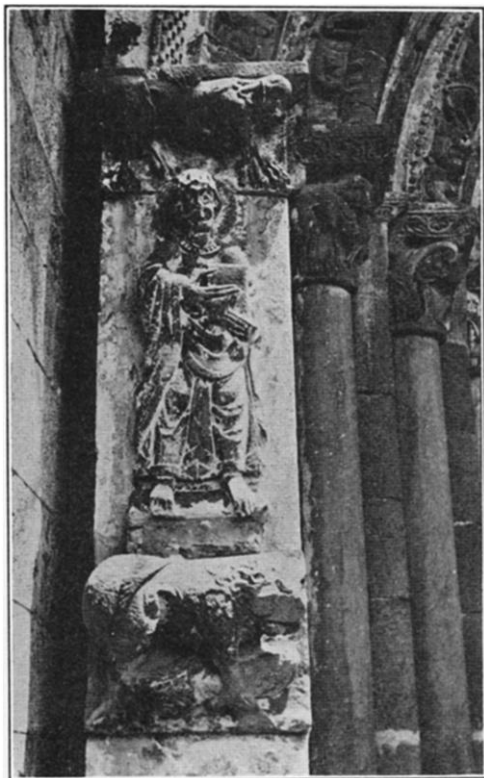


FIGURE 5.—S. SALVADOR DE LEIRE; APOSTLE
ON NORTH BUTTRESS OF PORTAL

¹ *Le Codex de S. Jacques de Compostela*, lib. IV, published by P. F. Fita and J. Vinson, Paris, Maisonneuf, 1882.

² Figured in Michel, *op. cit.* I, p. 627.

ency throughout the twelfth century. Where, as in Languedoc, so much has perished, we must allow for other pieces than those we know, some more tentative, some more perfect, which would be as likely to supply models to Spain and to the outlying provinces. The school of Toulouse is easily recognized, however far afield, in the legs crossed, the drapery curled at the bottom and seen a little as from below, the parallel, circular folds of drapery tight against the knee above and below, and two or three ways of treating the tresses of hair and beard—sometimes in separate, waved locks, sometimes in a series of loops. Another convention, that of representing the edge of a mantle like a plaited jabot, grows more formal and unreal as it occurs farther from

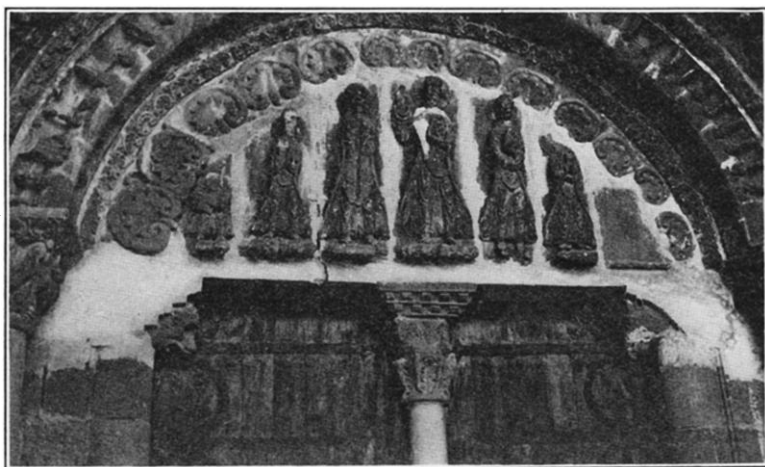


FIGURE 6.—S. SALVADOR DE LEIRE; TYMPANUM

home, for instance in the church of Souillac (Lot) and in Soria and S. Salvador de Leire (Spain).

A pair of apostles (Fig. 4) are built into the apses of S. Juan de Rabaneyra, in Soria, behind the altar. The pattern that frames them occurs at S. Antimo in Tuscany—a bit of Cluniac building. The church of S. Juan can hardly have been built earlier than 1170, when Alfonso VIII at his majority dowered the city richly; and it is not named in the list of parishes made for Alfonso the Wise in 1252. The reliefs look more like Toulouse than the photograph can show, particularly about the hair and beard, and in these forms, in the convention of the drapery, and

in the curious straddling posture, they are paralleled by the figures on the portal of S. Salvador de Leire.

This brings us back to the Way. The convent of S. Salvador lies just over the frontier of Navarre and just up the mountain-side from the road between Jaea and Pampeluna. To the kings of Navarre it was court and heart of the realm. By royal generosity Benedictines held it from 1097 to 1236; then Cistercians from 1236 to 1270 and again after 1273. The nave was built after that year, but the portal uses older material in the tympanum, and above and beyond the archivolts. The carving on the archivolts themselves may well be contemporary with the nave; the figures on buttresses and above are bits and scraps used over again:—S. James with staff and book, a group of apostles, Jonah coming out of the whale, two saints on the flanking buttresses, (Fig. 5), the three Maries, the upper half of an angel trumpeting to judgment, etc., even fragments of various patterns of interlacing cords. These are very Spanish, but the figures belong with those we have considered; the Maries may be paralleled at S. Gilles, and the single figures are ungrafted shoots from the Toulousan stock. The figures of the tympanum (Fig. 6) were made for a place similar to that they now occupy, and the conventions of hair, drapery and posing are Toulousan still, though provincial in workmanship.

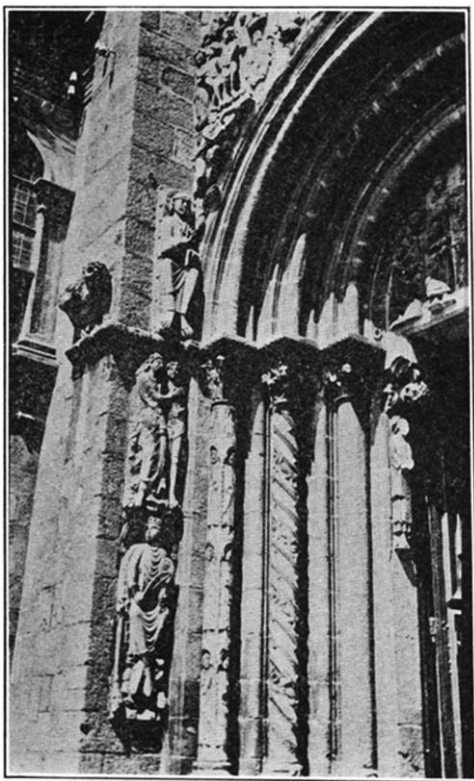


FIGURE 7.—SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA; SOUTH TRANSEPT PORTAL; FIGURES FROM DESTROYED NORTH PORTAL

Coming again to the *Puerta de las Plâterias* at Santiago it is easy to see the debt to the ateliers of Languedoc. Plainest in the two ladies of the Zodiac, that Sign of the Lion and Sign of the Ram that M. Bertaux cleverly associated with the slab which survives in the Museum at Toulouse,¹ it is almost as plain in the scenes from the north portal now built into the flanking

walls: the Creation, David, the Sacrifice of Isaac, all relating themselves to the work at S. Sernin (Fig. 7). Finally the tall figures across the whole face of the portal above the double doorway may profitably be compared with the apostles from S. Etienne (Fig. 8).

As a matter of comparison, even the apostles of the great twelfth century *Gloria* (Fig. 9), the western porch, by certain conventions of the drapery and the hair, by crossed legs, by turn of head and hand, go back ultimately to the same great school.² In the architectural conception, on the other hand, and the iconography in places, the narthex looks back to Vézelay, as may be seen by the capital carved

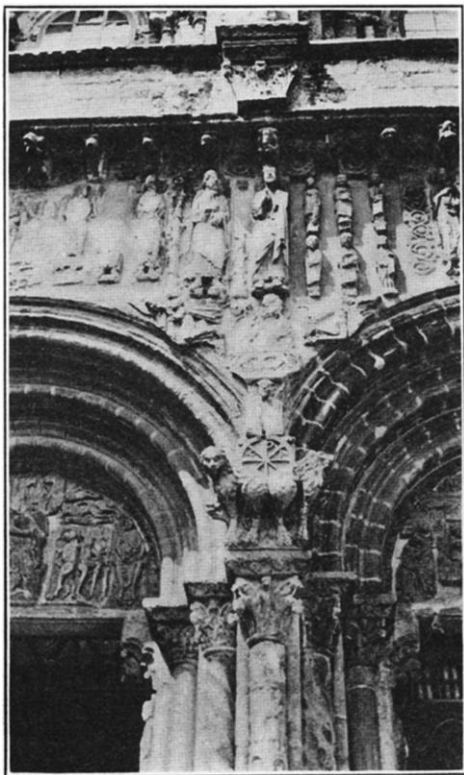


FIGURE 8.—SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA; SOUTH TRANSEPT PORTAL; FIGURES ABOVE DOORS (Sign of the Zodiac built into left-hand tympanium)

with the punishment of the slanderer, and the archivolt with the end of Desire in hell.³ Clearly, by this time the *chantier* of Santiago has grown quite Spanish, though it has learned from

¹ Figured in Michel, *op. cit.* II, p. 254.

² Cf. Michel, *op. cit.* p. 267.

³ Cf. Street, *op. cit.* I, p. 216.

France structure, theme, and technique; for the enclosed porch, the Christ of the Apocalypse, the apostles standing about the doorway, the great figure on the central post, are all French motives, but the elders ranged across the archivolts on the radii of the arch, the physical characteristics of the faces, the carving of most of the capitals, are local enough. While the architecture and the idea and the art came across the Pyrenees, yet the types and the disposition and the credit all are Spanish now.

II

The school of Chartres, in its territorial limitations, may be bounded roughly as follows: on the north by Senlis, on the east by S. Loup de Naud,¹ on the south by Bourges, on the west by Le Mans. Three queens from Chartres appear, notwithstanding, on the jamb shafts at S. Maria la Real of Sangüesa (Fig. 10), and three figures of men, not more ruinous but less beautiful, in the corresponding place on the other side. The door itself, jambs and archivolts, is of the pointed style of the thirteenth century, but the tympanum and the two rows of arcading above belong to another region and probably an earlier date.²

Sangüesa lies in Navarre, near to Pampeluna, but from the hill



FIGURE 9.—SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA; WEST PORTAL; FIGURES ON JAMB

¹Figured in *Mon. Piot*, Vol. XXI.

²Figured in Michel, *op. cit.* II, p. 259.

above the town the view extends into Aragon. "*La que nunca falta*" is her honorific title. In 1131 Alfonso II, el Batallador, gave to the Knights of S. John of Jerusalem his palace near the bridge and the church of S. Mary which stood in the *Patio del Rey*—the king's courtyard. That can hardly have been the present edifice or any part of it. The church must have been rebuilt more than

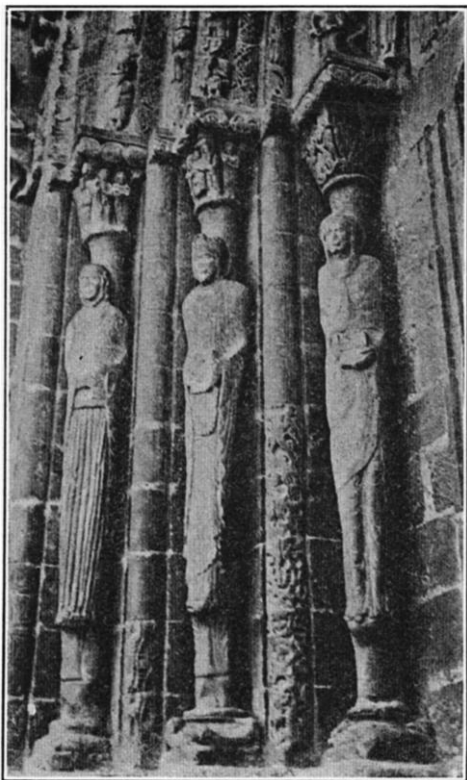


FIGURE 10.—SANGÜESA; S. MARIA LA REAL;
PORTAL; QUEENS ON WEST SIDE
(Photographed from below a deep basement)

once, for it is late transitional work. The portal is on the south side; and below the arcading which crowns it, the spandrels between that and the outer archivolt, the buttress which sustains it on the east, and the wall of a projecting chapel on the west, are all crowded with confused fragments of sculpture left on hand: S. James killing naked barbarians, two or three of the evangelical beasts, some very Lombard lions, a wise virgin with her lamp, and interlacing designs. At the top of this tangle, and in the gaps, fresh grotesque material is inserted. The double arcade across the entire top encloses, in the upper range, Christ in

the midst of the tetramorph, angels, and two apostles; eight more of these, or prophets, stand under the arches below. They all suggest the South, not the North, of France, but they do not particularly recall that use of arcades which is characteristic in Poitou and Saintonge. The lion and ox about the feet of Christ are facing the same way, instead of looking both to

Christ; this is the kind of blunder a provincial workman makes, who does not well understand the themes he handles. In the tympanum sits Christ in Judgement (Fig. 11), between four trumpeting angels; the blessed are marshalled in a double row on his right, and the damned on his left leave room for the weighing of souls by S. Michael and their torment in hell. Below, another arcade contains six apostles on each side of a seated Virgin, crowned, with the Child. The Christ has the same gesture as that at Conques, and the bare shoulder,¹ but the mitre crown of that at Moissac. The arcade, angels, and Doom occur at Cahors but in a riper style. Sr. Lampérez points out that the shafts which carry the jamb-figures do not rise from the pavement but begin



FIGURE 11.—SANGÜESA.—S. MARIA LA REAL; TYMPANUM

rather high up, showing that the former building lacked shafts. There can be no doubt of the provenance of these figures, and the archivolts carry, in the midst of other matters, fragments of a curious series of the months: December kills a hog, January holds cup and platter; one man holds the sign of the Goat, another that of the Bull, another the waterpots of Aquarius; a mermaid has the two Fishes, and the Twins are knights with triangular shields. The capitals in the nave are some of them storied, of the thirteenth century, and very fine; one of the Epiphany re-

¹Figured in Baum, *Romanesque Architecture in France*, pp. 78, 87, and 80 respectively.

calling the destroyed rood-screen at Chartres. M. Bertaux believes that this portal was built all at one time. I cannot agree to that. At Puente la Reina, in the church of Santiago a portal exists which was so built, and the work is all of a piece.

Full of Knights of S. John and of the Temple, of hospitals, lodging houses, lazar houses, Puente la Reina was where the ways met. It was richly endowed in 1146 by Garcia Ramirez,



FIGURE 12.—ESTELLA; S. MIGUEL; PORTAL;
FIGURES ON THE LEFT SIDE

who gave the town to the Templars, in 1150 by Sancho the Wise, in 1194 by Sancho the Strong. So late as 1487 the church of *El Crucifijo* was not yet finished, though the portal is archaic and barbarous past description. The town made all sorts of provision for all sorts of people, and styles meet and mingle about the doorway of S. James's church. Lombards were there, and you find their lions; eastern workmen, and they left superb lion-sphinxes; Frenchmen, and they recorded the stories of Genesis and the Gospel. In the cusped opening of the doorway they cut reliefs, from the Creation to the Fall; in the fine

archivolts above, now sadly weather-worn, the Visitation and Epiphany, Herod and the Kings, the Slaughter of the Innocents, the Angel with the Shepherds, the Flight into Egypt. All these towns along the Way are linked together by likenesses. Puente la Reina and Leire have each the Lombard lions and each a lesser portal marked with the chrism; Puente and Estella, each, one

early Gothic portal, and each, jamb-shafts capped with heads; in Sangüesa and in Estella a fourteenth century church shows the Doom and hell-mouth gaping for sinners like a castle gate and drawbridge.

S. Pedro la Rua, at Estella, has a cusped opening to the doorway like those at Puente and at Cirauqui.¹ The cloister is not French. The church is planned with three niches out of one apse, as at Souillac; now Souillac is a morning's walk from Rocamadour, and Our Lady of Rocamadour had a shrine at Estella.

The town enjoys an amusing history. It was virtually refounded by Sancho Ramirez, who ran the Way of S. James through it, in the teeth of the monks of S. Juan de la Peña.



FIGURE 13.—ESTELLA; S. MIGUEL; TYMPANUM

These, owning a convent some three miles away, were bent on having the Way cross their land for the profit it would bring. The king carried his road through his town, but the monks were too strong, and to appease them he gave them tithes of all the churches therein. Of the history of S. Miguel nothing is known. To right and left of the doorway stand great reliefs: the slaying of the dragon and weighing of the souls (Fig. 12); the angel at the tomb, with the three Maries. Now the motive of weighing the souls does not appear in the Judgement portal at Santiago of Compostela, and is so far from being familiar in

¹ Figured in Michel, *op. cit.* II, p. 290.

Spain that D. Pedro Madrazo confesses himself unable to read the significance of the scene here, and Sr. Serrano-Fatigati makes his demonstration at full length. It is purely French. French too is the fine Christ with the tetramorph and S. Mary and S. John in the tympanum (Fig. 13) and the arrangement of figures in the archivolts. Here are ranged in successive orders six angels, ten pairs of kings from the Apocalypse (the other two

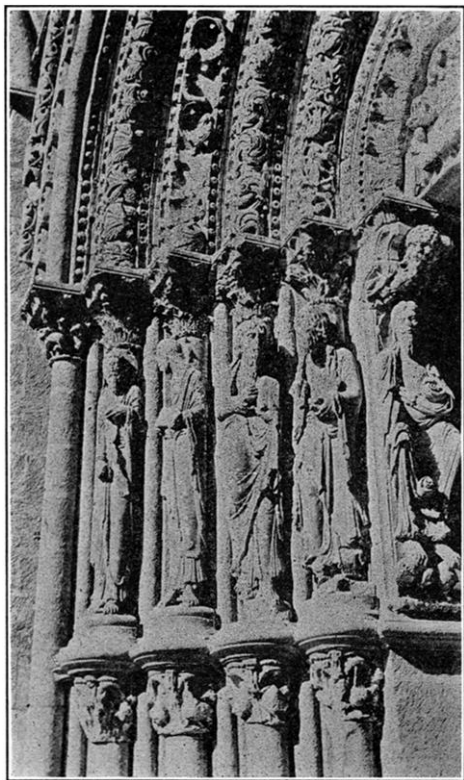


FIGURE 14.—ÁVILA; S. VICENTE; WEST PORTAL; FIGURES ON NORTH SIDE

pairs are inserted above), a row of prophets, and two rows of legendary saints including S. Martin, S. Vincent, S. Peter, in just such scenes as those at Leon cathedral, avowedly French. Above the doorway on either hand runs a row of apostles, planned, one would think, for some such array as that at Olite, or at S. Sepulcro in this very town, and then supplanted by the angelic figures. Uncertainties and alterations of this sort support the hypothesis of a mixed body of workmen recruited from other workmen on the tramp, no such compact organization as the stone cutters or glaziers of Chartres and

S. Denis. The technique of the work at Estella is probably Spanish,—it offers marked resemblance to that in the cloister of S. Juan de la Peña, the rich mother house in Aragon—but the conception of the splendid unit, tympanum, archivolts and flanking reliefs, is fine French.¹

¹ This portal is very fully illustrated in Serrano-Fatigati's *Portadas Artísticas de Monumentos Españoles*, Madrid, Hauser y Menet.

III

I left the Way once to show work of Languedoc in Soria; and now I want to show in Avila work of Burgundy—and other places.

Count Raymond of Burgundy in 1090 for the repeopling of Avila fetched ninety French knights, twenty-two masters of *piedras taller* and twelve of *jometria*, for the walls. In 1109 the work on the church of S. Vicente was well advanced. The second quarter of the century may serve for the south portal. But Ferdinand I, in 1252, and his successors after him to the end of the century, granted funds for rebuilding and repairs sorely needed.¹ M. Enlart has pointed out that the narthex at the west end is very like that at Vézelay, and that the leafage of the archivolts and the sculptures of the tympanum which deal with Dives and Lazarus, while irrelevant here, are taken from S. Lazare at Avallon, within three hours' walk



FIGURE 15.—AVILA; S. VICENTE; WEST PORTAL; FIGURE ON TRUMEAU

of Vézelay. But the apostles on the jambs here (Fig. 14), and the Christ blessing from the central post, I believe to belong to restoration in the second half of the thirteenth century, and to owe something to the Gloria of Santiago. The seated Christ would do better for a S. James (Fig. 15). Two apostles are placed

¹ Street, *op. cit.* I, p. 254.

against the inner face of the doorjambs proper, as they are in Galicia and are not in Burgundy, and the remainder turn one to another with the same gestures of head and hand as Master Matthew's. The treatment of the drapery about the feet is, however, different; it is reminiscent of Vézelay,¹ and is very like that of the Annunciation on the south porch.

This south doorway presents a curious collection of statues: on



FIGURE 16.—AVILA; S. VICENTE; SOUTH PORTAL; FIGURES ON EAST SIDE

the right hand (Fig. 16) a king seated under the corbel on the face of the door post, and a pair of standing figures, male and female, visibly more archaic. I should suppose them part of the first building. On the left hand a little seated Virgin makes a pendant to the king and the angel annunciant stands beside her; both have been set against the door after it was finished, and the edges still show where their place was dug out.² In style they are intermediate between the standing figures and those of the west portal. This points to the existence of a permanent *chantier* at Avila, founded when the re-peopling was begun, in

the time of Alfonso VI, and maintained for the building of the cathedral. Founded by Count Raymond and continued probably by his son Alfonso the Emperor, the cathedral was building through all the thirteenth century. The Count of Burgundy, who

¹ Figured in Baum, *op. cit.* p. 138, and cf. drawing in Michel, *op. cit.* I, p. 639.

² Figured in Michel, *op. cit.* II, p. 263.

had imported his first workmen from his own land, would keep up a healthy circulation of intercourse between the two regions, and the developing art would receive from time to time fresher nourishment from the place of its origin. Meanwhile the other current which perpetually circulated, that of pilgrimage to and from Santiago, brings other ideas which, being themselves French at the second and third remove, offer no incongruity. The church of S. Vincent grows, takes up all that comes, stands a complete and splendid whole.

Everywhere in Spain we find, side by side with the great cathedrals built under foreign supervision and by royal patronage—Toledo, Leon, Seville, Burgos—this art which comes up out of the ground, feeds on whatever is within reach, and becomes in the end purely Spanish. In poor towns and those along the Way, which have no strong individual life, the various elements readily catch the eye; those that wrought came from far and went away again. In places that had a stiller, a more patient and more stable life, like Santiago and Avila, a living school appeared, and whatever it received, it altered into its own likeness. It set thereon its own image and superscription.

GEORGIANA GODDARD KING.

BRYN MAWR.
1914.